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Blackdown Hills

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Issue No 97 January 2013



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THE UPPER Culm Community Land Trust has submitted plans to Mid Devon District Council build 12 affordable homes on a site on Culmstock Road, Hemyock.

The planning application was due to be discussed by the council in December but has been postponed until this month.

The Upper Culm Community Land Trust was officially set up in March 2012 under the chairmanship of Heather Stallard.

The parishes of Hemyock and Clayhidon came together to form the trust - a not for profit organisation - set up by local people to help improve or protect their village or neighbourhood.

Run by volunteers, the Community Land Trust (CLT) can develop housing or other assets at permanently affordable levels for long-term community benefit.

A CLT does this in three ways:

by owning, managing and developing things such as land, homes, shops, pubs, allotments and even schools, all at cost price with no profit margin on top; by holding these things in trust so that they are affordable and available for future generations; by being accountable to local people.

The Upper Culm CLT's assets are kept for the benefit of the community in perpetuity. CLTs are democratic; their membership being open to all members of the village or neighbourhood. Benefits of membership include invitations to CLT meetings, the chance once a year to vote on a board of directors, access to newsletters and other communications and the opportunity to participate in more specialist working groups to use your skills to support the future of our community.

The land trust is now looking for

expressions of interest from residents of Hemyock and Clayhidon who would be eligible to live in these 12 homes. There have already some enquiries by potential tenants.

● A separate home in Clayhidon which was built and designated as an 'affordable home' has remained empty for more than a year due to a dispute between the developer and Mid Devon District Council.

Skills of the hills

THE next Skills of the Hills annual hedge event will take place on Saturday, March 9th 2013 at Yarty Farm in Membury.

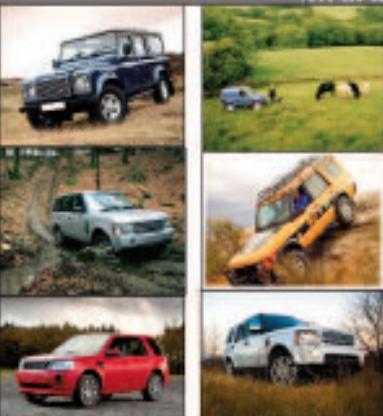
Hedgelaying courses by the Blackdown Hills Hedge Association have become so popular that they have added an extra course to their schedule on February 16th.

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News from the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Beef and butterflies in the Blackdowns

ANYONE who owns or farms land on the wet, marshy valley sides of the Blackdown Hills is being offered new support through the Beef and Butterflies project.

This locally-run project is offering free and independent advice on the management of marshy grazing land throughout 2013.

It is also offering a chance to join a new local association to help owners of this land learn from each other and make the best choices for

by Gavin Saunders

the future.

Despite its beauty, the Blackdown Hills landscape can be very difficult to work, with steep gradients, poor soils and wet ground along spring lines.

Yet the rushy pastures created by these conditions are very valuable for wildlife, supporting plants like ragged robin, devil's-bit scabious and heath spotted orchid, and butterflies like marbled whites and the very rare

marsh fritillary. These pastures are there because they have been grazed for centuries, but in recent years grazing on this sort of poor land has become less economic, and many sites have fallen out of use.

Then some simple advice on the best management for your land may be helpful, and the project can also offer assistance in exploring sources of grant aid.

Agricultural funding is limited at the moment but if your land is not already in Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) then the project can help you with your ELS application.

Income per hectare

ELS will provide you with an income of £30 per hectare for five years which, although not huge, may provide you with some added funds to tackle fencing or other issues.

If you are already in ELS or Higher Level Stewardship (HLS), then the project may still be able to give you useful advice on achieving the prescriptions in your grant agreement.

There is a huge amount of experience and knowledge amongst the communities of the Blackdown Hills of how to make the best of this marshy land, and a major objective of Beef and Butterflies is to provide a



■ CATTLE grazing wet pasture

forum for the exchange and sharing of that experience.

What sort of livestock is best suited to wet land? How vulnerable are cattle to parasites and other infections when they graze these places? What is the best way to treat scrub invasion? Are there farmers out there who are looking for spare grazing? How do you identify the different plants and other wildlife

on wet pastures?

To this end the Beef and Butterflies project is helping to form a new association for owners and managers of wet marshy land in the Blackdown Hills, which will be launched with a farm walk in May 2013.

The farm walk will be open to all, and will provide an opportunity to see grazing management in action, discuss funding possibilities and provide

links between graziers and landowners without suitable stock.

The Beef and Butterflies project is run by local people, and supported by the Blackdown Hills AONB, the Forestry Commission and Natural England. It is funded by Making it Local, a locally-managed grants scheme in the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONB areas, incorporating funding

from the EU, Defra and Leader.

Any landowner or manager seeking free independent advice or further information should contact either Len North (on 01460 234309, mobile 07932 144411, email len.north@axis-connect.com) or George Greenshields (on 01297 678420, mobile 07770 961120, email George@ecologic-consultants.co.uk).



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Devon Doctors to help wildlife

THE organisation responsible for the county's urgent GP out-of-hours healthcare has teamed up with Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) in a bid to do its bit for the county's environment.

As a social enterprise, committed to benefiting the community in which it operates, Devon Doctors has always attached great importance to environmental issues and jumped at the opportunity to become a corporate sponsor of Devon Wildlife Trust.

Chief executive Chris Wright said: "While our first priority is always the well-being of our patients, we're mindful that we also have a responsibility to the environment and are at pains to ensure our carbon footprint is as small as possible."

"Wherever we can we endeavour to assist callers to Devon Doctors over the phone but there will, inevitably, be occasions when we need to visit patients who are especially vulnerable, and unable to get to one of our treatment centres, in their homes. Indeed, last year our GPs visited more than 30,000 patients, as a result of which our drivers clocked up more than half-a-million miles."

"While this is unavoidable, we're delighted to be able to redress the balance a little by lending our support to DWT."

DWT's chief executive Harry Barton said: "We're thrilled to have the support of another not-for-profit organisation, which shares our aim of keeping Devon healthy. We look forward to working together for the benefit of the natural environment."

In due course, Devon Doctors is looking forward to supporting DWT's Working Wetlands project and, in so doing, offsetting some part of its carbon footprint. The

initiative involves the restoration of wetland areas, with the capacity to absorb atmospheric carbon in a similar way to coal but much more quickly, and is regarded as a local, long-term and effective alternative to standard offset schemes.

Devon Doctors will also be encouraging staff to transform their gardens, and other locations, into bee-friendly zones in support of DWT's 2013 campaign to Get Devon Buzzing. This vital project encourages the use of plants that support the local

bee population by providing bee homes, as well as campaigning for a reduction in the use of pesticides.

"Devon Doctors is already acknowledged as one of the country's leading providers of urgent out-of hours care," said Mr Wright. "However, as a social enterprise, our corporate responsibility doesn't stop there and we look forward to working in partnership with DWT and to encouraging both staff and service users to protect the environment."



■ DEVON Wildlife Trust's Tracey Ebbrell presents Devon Doctors Chief Executive Chris Wright with a certificate in recognition of their support.



Hospital volunteer

JULIET Heaton from St Andrew's Church, Clayhidon, had been commissioned as a Hospital Chaplaincy Volunteer at Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton.

She is pictured being presented with her certificate by the Reverend Judith Lawrence



A CHRISTINGLE service was held at St Andrew's Church, Clayhidon, when all those attending received a christingle.

Many extras were delivered to children and adults who were unable to attend.

The service was greatly enjoyed and refreshments followed in the Church Room.

Measures to reduce speeding in village

DEVON and Cornwall Police have reviewed the issue of speeding in and around the 30mph zone in Smeatharpe.

As a result the police have agreed to will continue to station speed camera vehicles in the village periodically; to send resources to the area when events are held on Smeatharpe Airfield; and, when the road through Smeatharpe is next resurfaced, the road markings will be changed so as to discourage excessive speed. For instance, the white line along the centre of the road will be removed

and white lines will be marked along the edge of the road, thus giving a narrowing effect and encouraging drivers to reduce speed. Other "engineering lining works" will also be considered.

The Campaign of Action for Noise and Nuisance in the Blackdowns have waged a long campaign against speeding in the village.

Prior to the police meeting, their spokesperson, Graham Long, said: "According to the Devon & Cornwall Police website, 77 drivers have already been caught speeding in

Smeatharpe since May.

"Compared with the other two locations in the Honiton Rural area where Devon & Cornwall Police regularly set up speed traps, Smeatharpe experiences far more speeding than the other two areas monitored - in Dunkeswell 40 drivers were caught and in Awliscombe nine drivers were caught.

"Police do not state how many times speed traps were set up or how long they operated for. All three locations have part time speed warning indicators but it is clear that the biggest problem with

speeding in the Honiton Rural area is in Smeatharpe.

"The electronic speed warning sign alone is clearly not working and one wonders how many of the drivers caught by the police were travelling through the village to reach the banger stadium or airfield motor sports events such as Streetwars.

"Readers concerned about the danger to pedestrians and others in the village may wish to take this issue up with local councillors or Devon and Cornwall Police."

Last chance to apply for 'Making it Local' funding

THE DEADLINE for the next and last funding round for Making it Local is January 28th 2013.

This round is open to small grants only (under £10,000). All projects applying for this round should be planned to take place March - July 2013. This gives time for submitting and processing the

claims before the end of the programme in December 2013.

Applicants must fill out an Initial Project Outline to check they are eligible and get some advice before filling out the small grants application.

The Blackdown Hills Business Association is running a funding

workshop for people getting to grips with the application form. It will be on Tuesday January 8th at the East Devon Business Centre, Honiton; booking is essential for this workshop by emailing the Making it Local team. on makinlocal@devon.gov.uk

NEWS briefs

RECENT heavy rain has washed away a large section of a track in Willtown Wood, Clayhidon, preventing the neighbouring landowner, who has right of access, from driving to his land.

At a recent meeting of Clayhidon Parish Council it was decided that the council had no obligation to repair the track.

A NATIONAL charity is seeking volunteer dog walkers in and around Honiton.

The Cinnamon Trust helps the elderly and terminally ill and their pets. Sally Collins, who is leading the search for volunteers, said: "We seek to keep owner and pet together for as long as possible with the help of a national network of volunteers who assist when day to day care poses a problem.

Potential volunteers can call Sally on 01736 758 707 or email volunteer@cinnamon.org.uk for more information. There is also a page about volunteering page on the charity's website at www.cinnamon.org.uk

THE heating and lighting project at Buckland St Mary Church is almost completed.

Six chandeliers were in place ready for the Remembrance Service and two and a half more chandeliers will be hung when they are delivered in early January. The wiring is already in place.

FIREFIGHTERS were called to Yarcombe to release a dog stuck in a badger sett.

A unit from Honiton was despatched at about 11.50am on Saturday, December 8th and a spokesperson for the fire and rescue service said: "Crews released the dog using digging equipment."

WELLINGTON Scouts have been given the go ahead to use Gray's Quarry in Clayhidon Woods for some of their outdoor activities on a trial basis for the next year.

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THE BLACKDOWN HILLS TRUST

HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

Yarcombe Young Farmers flying high



■ **FLYING HIGH:** Club members present the cheque to an air ambulance representative. Yarcombe Young Farmers' Club members raised more than £2,100 for Devon Air Ambulance Trust this year. The air ambulance is the club's chosen charity for 2012 and the year's fundraising programme yielded a total of £2,120. Club member Rebecca Laramy said the money was raised through various activities including a pantomime re-run with an auction. She added: "Other activities included a sponsored bike ride where six of our members cycled from Yarcombe to Weston-super-Mare, our yearly raft race, a car treasure hunt, a rounders/family evening and other small events."



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Culm Valley Young Farmers

CULM Valley Young Farmers held a new members evening in December which attracted many potential new members. A spokesperson said: "It was a great chance to get to know everyone with some fun and games for everyone to get involved in!"

Member Maggie Palmer has won a Devon YFC Junior Travel Scholarship which means that she will be jetting off next summer thanks to some very kind sponsors. A group of members will also be heading for Val Thorens in the French Alps for some skiing this month. Members have also been taking part in the "How to be a better shepherd" course in conjunction with the Laura Perse Trust and Mount Vets.

There have also been outings to Cheltenham Races and ice skating. A Christmas meal followed by a disco which was held at the Beaminbridge Inn with around 50 members and their parents attending.

The young farmers have decided that their charity for the coming year will be Chicks. Chicks gives respite to disadvantaged children, this may be children living in poverty or children from abusive backgrounds for example.

New members are always welcome to join Culm Valley Young Farmers and it is not necessary to be a farmer. The next meeting will be held on Monday 14th January at Forbes Lounge, Hemyock, 8pm.

■ Pictured are the members who took part in a netball tournament in Honiton. The team consisted of Kirsty John, Emily Davis, Emily Vallis, Dolly Boyce, Lauren Adams, Louisa Squire and Maggie Palmer. They came fourth. The group has also taken part in pool and darts against Sid & Otter YFC in the last few weeks.



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Countryside volunteering could be your new year's resolution

LOCAL people are being encouraged to fight the Christmas flab, beat the winter blues and meet new people by getting involved in a countryside volunteering activity in 2013. A variety of practical conservation opportunities will be available in the Blackdown Hills AONB as part of the 'A Force for Nature' project, which is supported by a grant of £39,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The opportunities available will include physical activities such as scrub clearance, coppicing, woodland management and Himalayan balsam

pulling. Or people can get involved in less physical work, such as helping out with important wildlife and heritage surveys. Activities are run by experienced volunteer leaders from organisations such as the National Trust, Devon and Somerset Wildlife Trusts, the RSPB and the Neroche Conservation Volunteers.

Catherine Beedell, Blackdown Hills Countryside Volunteering Hub Coordinator said: "Taking part in a volunteering activity in the great outdoors is a fantastic way to get healthier, as well as doing your bit to help conserve this Area of Out-

standing Natural Beauty."

Regular conservation volunteer Martin Taylor said: "I volunteer in the Blackdown Hills because it matters. Initially I felt that it mattered in an environmental way, now I feel that it matters much more to my own sense of wellbeing. You give and you don't always know what you will get back, but the overwhelming reward is that of belonging to a team. As individuals we matter, as a team we achieve."

The overall aim of the 'A Force for Nature' project is to raise levels of awareness and understanding of their natural

heritage amongst local residents and communities, and to help safeguard national and regional priority Biodiversity Action Plan species. The project will use five heritage learning themes in interpretation on specific sites and in information provided to volunteer groups; the themes are: grazing management, woodland management, historic environment interpretation, butterfly life histories and plant, tree, insect, bird and mammal identification.

Speaking about the grant award, Richard Bellamy, HLF's acting Head of South West, said: "The Blackdown Hills AONB is one of the south west's most unspoilt habitats, rich in the variety of its wildlife, and encompassing a range of landscapes from grassland to heath and mire. We welcomed the opportunity to be able to support this project, which will provide the opportunity for many more people to become involved with and understand the natural heritage of this fascinating area."

To get started go to www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/volunteering or call 01823 680681.

Recognition for local volunteers

A LEADING local charity, Devon Wildlife Trust, has recently achieved the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard, recognising the excellent work it does with volunteers.

Devon Wildlife Trust regularly receives help from more than 300 volunteers, all of whom give up their time and talents to help the charity's vital work for local wildlife.

The Trust's Dawn Lenn, who coordinates their efforts said: "This has come as wonderful news. We try hard to manage volunteers well and to give people the opportunity to contribute positively to nature conservation.

"It's lovely to know we are getting it right. The benefit to Devon Wildlife Trust's work is tremendous with the number of hours volunteers donate each year in the tens of thousands."

Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for all organisations involving volunteers. It aims to improve the quality of the volunteering experience for all volunteers and for organisations to acknowledge the enormous contribution made by volunteers.

The award scheme is managed by the UK Volunteering Forum and delivered by Volunteering England.

Devon Wildlife Trust was assessed against a range of best practice standards and proved to excel in all aspects of working with its volunteers.

Ms Lenn added: "DWT was set up by volunteers 50 years ago, and volunteers have remained central to its activities ever since. I hope that achieving this award in our 50th anniversary year will help demonstrate to everyone who ever helped DWT just how highly they are regarded."

Devon Wildlife Trust's volunteers come from all backgrounds and all parts of the county. The range of tasks they undertake varies from office administration to undertaking practical management tasks on the Trust's nature reserves.

Anyone wishing to join as a volunteer should visit www.devonwildlifetrust.org or call 01392 279244.

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■ FLOODING in the Blackdowns

Councillors call for more self help to limit flooding

AT THE December meeting of Clayhidon Parish Council there was considerable discussion on the state of roads in the Blackdowns following the recent floods.

In some places the road surface has been washed away and many culverts and drains were overwhelmed by the quantity of water and debris.

Councillor Ray Radford agreed to arrange for a meeting in the parish with the road's foreman to look at the problems.

However, in this time of austerity, the county council does not have the resources to clear ditches and drains as regularly as in the past and the parish council feel that parishioners should be prepared to help by clearing drains and culverts near their property to enable the water to run away more easily.

Residents said that the flooding had been the worst for 30 years with torrential rain falling on already waterlogged ground scouring soil and stones from fields.

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Where can village build 35 new homes by the year 2026?

EAST Devon District Council is preparing a 'Villages Plan', not to be confused with the Parish Plan, detailing policies for certain villages including Dunkeswell.

The plan will set out boundaries for future development, identify land to be allocated for housing and possibly other uses and any other relevant policies.

The Villages Plan will need to show where 35 new homes can be built in Dunkeswell by 2026.

Landowners have already had the opportunity to put forward land that they are willing to make available for development and these sites are shown on the Dunkeswell website.

Most of these sites have been assessed to see whether there are physical/technical/viability constraints to building housing in the village. The results may be viewed at www.eastdevon.gov.uk/shlaa.

The plans also show important features, such as landscape designations, existing built-up area boundaries, conservation areas and floodplains, an aerial view.

Dunkeswell Parish Council sought the views of parishioners in October and last month sent a report to East Devon District Council setting out the preferred sites and issues raised.

The parish-council sought the views of Dunkeswell residents on a number of issues, including preferred sites for housing development.

There are three areas put forward by their landowners, each of which could accommodate the 35 dwellings proposed for the period to 2026.

The area adjacent to the sports field is intended for the school but any part of the remaining areas would suffice.

Send your Blackdowns stories to
blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

Dunkeswell circuit is the place to race

THE 2012 season at the Dunkeswell Kart Club provided some of the closest and most competitive racing in the club's history with driving standards also improving throughout the year.

Looking back over the year, 931 drivers competed at the South West's premier circuit with numbers peaking at 121 for the July round. If any circuit is bucking the national trend in entries, Dunkeswell is at the forefront of the revival. A flowing, super smooth track with close and competitive racing aligned with a friendly atmosphere has attracted drivers from all over the country.

The NKRA chose the circuit to host the prestigious Formula Blue championship and a tie up with Llandow Kart Club with the Dragon Challenge saw most of the silverware crossing the bridge back to the West Country. Interestingly, weather wise, despite the tracks reputation, the dry weather out qualified the wet by 6 to 3 although when it rained it was biblical.

The Honda cadets provided some great action, the exuberance of youth and most importantly, big grids. Over the eight rounds, two drivers dominated the top of the standings - Ryan Luscombe and Jordan Hurman.

Luscombe's early championship lead was lost

after the first round and he had to fight Hurman to get it back by round four. After that, he maintained it to take the title by 18 points with Hurman second and Tom Canning in third. Hurman and Luscombe also took the honours in the Dragon Challenge showing exceptional sportsmanship by electing to share the title rather than see who would win on count back.

The Comet cadets was a small grid and in reality with Alex Quinn away on Super 1 duties, it was left to Tommy Foster and Kieran Channing, the only two club drivers to compete in all eight rounds to fight it out for the title. Foster's experience showed through and he dominated the races that Quinn was absent from. Foster took the title with Channing having an excellent season in second, despite only competing in four of the eight rounds, Quinn was third. Foster's year was capped by his victory in the Dragon Challenge.

MiniMax and another Channing was on the hunt for a title! Sam Stephens took an early lead in the stand-



ings but by round three Izaac Channing was topping the table and would hold it to take not only the class championship but also the South West Champion title on the way. Stephens kept him honest all the way and it only by a margin of six points that he lost out coming second but was boosted by his winning the Dragon Challenge. David Spillers consistency got his third in his first full season.

Junior Max and Sam Morgan's early lead was cut short by round three when James Moorcroft dominated from then on. Liam Williams was putting in some good results and moved into second in the championship. Moorcroft was the class of the field at the South West Championships when despite not finishing a heat still managed to take the title. Williams best efforts to hold second failed when he was nudged into third spot by Morgan who managed to accrue enough points in the last round after the dropped scores were taken into account. Both Moorcroft and Morgan were successful in the Dragon Challenge after the stewards

awarded them equal status as champions.

James Clarkson was peerless in the Senior Max class leading from round one. It was left to Stewart Baker and Tyler Weedon to battle it out for second and third. The youth of Weedon saw him gain the upper hand in the early rounds as Baker held a watching brief. By round seven, Baker's persistence and experience enabled him to pull out a four-point lead and move into second in the championship. Out front, Clarkson was putting points between him the rest of the grid finishing 43 points ahead of Baker who in turn was 11 points clear of Weedon in third. Popurh place driver, Ashley Lewis, having his best season in Seniors so far, took the honours for the club in the Dragon Challenge.

It was brilliant to see a resurgence in the 177 class with grids topping 15 plus in most rounds. Defending champion Darren Lane had a slow start but by round three had got into his stride and was on top of the standings. The hugely experienced Rob Knight, fended off Wayne Stone to take second in the championship with Stone some 69 points behind him in third place, but could console himself with his victory in the Dragon Challenge.

As with all racing, nothing would be possible without the tireless work of the circuit management group, especially circuit manager, Paul Bromham, the MSA officials, the medical teams and, of note, the marshalling team who have remained focused and professional whatever the conditions. Special thanks must also go to the drivers and mechanics who have provided the swelling crowds of spectators with some close, competitive and most importantly safe racing and whose attendance have proven beyond doubt that Dunkeswell continues to be the place to race.

MP declare new golf club facilities open

ON A day that saw torrential rain and gale force winds, the Lady Captain of Honiton Golf Club, Jackie Seager, took the decision to hold the opening ceremony for a new on-course facility in the warmth and dry of the clubhouse, much to the relief of those who attended.

Mrs Seager opened the event by welcoming Neil Parish, MP for Tiverton and Honiton.

She said that the project had taken three years to complete starting with the initial planning application stage. This was followed by the completion of several very detailed applications for lottery funding, where the goalposts changed every year, to researching suitable products and finally the building construction, which had taken two weeks.

Mrs Seager thanked all those people who had been involved in the project and said that everyone at the club was indebted to Sport England for awarding the grant and for their support.



■ DRY IN THE CLUBHOUSE: MP Neil Parish declares the new golf club facilities open

She then invited Mr Parish to cut the ribbon which had been carefully draped across a photograph of the new eco-friendly 'on-course' toilets.

Mr Parish replied by saying how pleased he was to attend and that as a Member of Parliament, he was only too well aware of the

imbalance between the planning and preparation stages of a project versus the actual time to carry out the work.

One could certainly not have accused Mr Parish of cutting corners on the day for, having spent time talking to everyone who was present, he braved the ele-

Point-to-point season gets underway

THE WESSEX area Point-to Point season kicks off on Sunday, January 6th 2013, with the Larkhill Racing Club fixture.

Twenty-three meetings are scheduled in Wessex, culminating in the Weston & Banwell's evening fixture on Wednesday, May 15th.

For a free colour leaflet detailing all the meetings in the Wessex area, send an SAE to Gill Armstrong, Pantiles, Penselwood, Wincanton, Somerset BA9 8NF.

Chloe Roddick made a flying start when Mahonia and Combehay won at Wadebridge on December 9th, while Richard Barber got off the mark with PPORC winner Glass'n'A Half. Alex Dunn has five horses at West Buckland including her prolific

trio Picaroon, who refused to race at Wadebridge, Double Mead and Rainbow Tree. Newcomers are Ruby Kew, who was fifth in her sole outing for licensed trainer Alan King, and the ex-David Pipe-trained dual hurdle race winner Arrayan, who started favourite for the 2011 Imperial Cup at Sandown.

Sue Popham has four horses at her Wellington stables, including Carlos Gardel, a winner at Wadebridge last season. Newcomers include Doncaster purchases Only The Best, who was second at Stratford in April, and Getaway Driver, who has been placed five times under Rules. Swansbrook, the winner of a bumper, hurdle race and chase under Rules, completes the team.

Jane Western has four horses at Forde Abbey near Chard. Jane has retained dual 2012 winner Benedictus, who will be aimed at hunter chases, and Last Minute Notice, who ran a promising race at Bratton Down in May. Newcomers are Shootin The Breeze, a winner at Thurles in February 2012, and Gypsy Jack, the winner of two of his three points when trained by Richard Barber.

Shaikier and Stantway Surprise have retired, so Colin and Julie Bright of Combe St Nicholas near Chard will be represented by Irish bumper and hurdle race winner Some Slam, who was bought at Ascot in June out of Gary Moore's yard. Michael Legg will take the ride.

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Challenge for young writers

CALLING all budding young writers in the Blackdown Hills.

The Countryside Alliance has launched a Young Countryside Writer competition to give 12-18 year olds with a passion for the countryside a chance to write for its membership magazine.

All entrants need to do is submit 300 words on what the British countryside means to them and what their favourite aspects are.

Issues covered could be farming, field sports, local food, the changing seasons, conservation or just walking the dog – this is a wide-ranging competition.

The judging panel consists of Countryside Alliance Executive Chairman Barney White-Spunner, Shooting Times Editor Alastair Balmain, Countrymans Weekly Editor Tracey Allen and Michael Clayton, author and former Horse & Hound Editor who has written extensively for many sporting titles.

Countryside Alliance Executive Chairman Barney White-Spunner commented: "This competition offers a chance for budding young writers to gain some valuable experience and confidence.

"The Countryside Alliance is keen to encourage the next generation to get involved in the countryside and writing about their experiences is a vital part of that. We have an experienced judging panel, all of us passionate about reflecting our countryside through the written word. I know there are many talented young writers out there and look forward to reading their work.

- This competition is open to 12-18 year olds.
- 300 words on "what the British countryside means to you" should be sent to news@countryside-alliance.org by Tuesday 2nd April 2013.
- Submissions may appear on the Countryside Alliance website
- The prize is the chance to write for the Countryside Alliance's membership magazine in 2013.

Second thriller for local author

A MAN who lives near Honiton is about to have a second book published this year.

Glyn Smith-Wild decided to retire from work in finance to concentrate on writing instead. His decision came after having been involved in a car accident and his debut, *Sanctuary*, was released on May 29th. The follow-up, *Repercussions*, went on sale on December 12th.

The main character in both books is named Ben Coverdale and *Sanctuary* starts with Ben's decision to start a new life in France after his love-life in England collapsed. A story of suspense and intrigue emerged - and *Repercussions* is the second installment in the trilogy.

Mr Smith-Wild said: "When, during a period of depression, it was suggested by a friend that I should write a book, I didn't think the idea was a very good one.

"After all, I had been in finance for most of my working life.

"How could I now become a writer?"

But he eventually decided to have a go, and found that he loved writing. The plot and characters developed and his depression almost disappeared.

"If you enjoy reading my books half as much as I enjoyed writing them, then I will be very happy.

"The first book was well received by read-

ers and almost every review says that they can't wait for the sequel. Now it's here.

"The discovery and development of my characters has given me a new lease of life – almost a parallel existence. I only wish I had retired much earlier.

"When I started writing *Sanctuary*, I thought it would be a one off, but my characters had different ideas.

"The story lines that weaved through *Sanctuary* just had to be continued.

"My characters are quite forceful when it comes to the story lines, and I ignore them at my peril.

"Many is the time, having written a thousand words or so during the day, that I am woken by one or other of my characters saying: 'I wouldn't have said that' or 'There's no way I would have done that'.

"And sure enough, when I look back at the script, I see that they are right. Weird or what?"

When asked what he likes to do when not writing, he replied: "That's not much of the time these days, but I do enjoy the beautiful countryside where I live.

"I enjoy good food, red wine, dark chocolate music, but not necessarily in that order."

Mr Smith-Wild has a website with helpful tips for aspiring writers at www.otter2000.com



■ GLYN Smith-Wild

A health check for your business to make it more efficient

IF YOU are a small business based in the Blackdown Hills area and would like one to one, confidential and practical advice to help improve your profits and look at ways to make your business more efficient, then BIP can help you with a Business Health Check.

This is a project funded by Making it Local to provide business advice in the area.

BIP's fully qualified and experienced advisors can meet you at a location and time convenient to you, and there are hundreds of pounds of support and advice available to you for just a £20

contribution from you.

If you are looking to start a business, you can meet like minded people, share ideas and get some practical business advice by going along to their free Enterprise Clubs which take place 10 am – 12 pm at East Devon Business Centre, Honiton

on the last Monday of every month. You can book your place online or just go along.

If you are looking for advice and guidance on completing a Business Plan for your business, they will take you through the process in easy bite-sized chunks, so you know exactly

where you want to get to - and how to get there.

For further information on all the services available from BIP, visit their website or call on free phone 0800 592872 from landlines, or 0330 1000338 from mobiles and landlines.

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Walk into a new life

FOR years Christine Richards has battled with her weight, and about 10 years ago developed back problems that were life changing and left her battling pain ever since. Despite being advised by her Dr

to lose weight Christine could not find the "diet" for her. She became more and more solitary with no confidence and got caught in a vicious spiral of ill health and comfort eating. It was a shock being told she

had a cholesterol level of 10.6, double the acceptable level, and being told she was grossly obese.

Said Christine "I cried myself all the way home and continued to comfort eat and hate myself

for letting this happen. I wasn't blaming anyone else, it was me who had allowed it to get this far, and it was only me who could change it".

The turning point came on a shopping trip when I picked up the local

paper and was drawn to a story of one person's battle with weight and their journey to success. "I was consumed by a realisation that this could be about me!!!! It was the wake up call I needed as this seemed more real than a warning from my Dr!"

With the support of her husband, Christine decided it was time to join a Slimming Group in Honiton.

"Tuesday

came and the day seemed so long, my nerves were in tatters, but I knew I had to go to Slimming World that evening. I actually walked to the meeting and it was the hardest walk I had ever made. I stood outside the door my heart pounding and my legs like jelly, and on stepping in realised there were some familiar faces and people were smiling at me which is not what I expected.

The moment Sharon, the Consultant, introduced herself to me I felt some sort of inner peace as it felt

right to be there. I was totally reassured that I would get the support I needed throughout, and I knew I had done the right thing by going"

"Although I was scared when I first weighed, the weight started to drop off and all by enjoying food I loved. I still have the card I received for receiving my first ½ stone, and one year on I have now achieved my own Personal Target Weight and couldn't be happier. I walk everywhere now, I have my confidence back and even help Sharon in group now. I even go out socially which was a no-no beforeI have my life back"

Christine attends Slimming World at the Honiton Baptist Church which is held on Tuesdays @ 5.30pm & 7.30pm and also on Wednesdays @ 9.30am & 11.30am. For more information please call Sharon on 01404 41513.



Before



After

Kathy Arnold Therapies

Kathy Offers a wide range of therapies including:

Aromatherapy;

Aromatherapy is the use of Essential Oils, which are natural substances, extracted from fruits, flowers, roots, trees or herbs. Carefully chosen Essential Oils can influence the body and mind, being uplifting or relaxing, stimulating or soothing. The aroma of the oils alone stimulates the brain to bring about a sense of relaxation and to refresh the mood.

Reflexology;

Reflexology works on the principle that there are reflexes in the feet that relate to all the glands, organs and parts of the body, and by massaging those reflexes we can relieve congestion, release the vital energy glow to all parts of the body and stimulate the body's natural healing powers.

Indian Head Massage;

Indian Head Massage was first introduced in the UK in 1981 and has expanded to include part of the back, the shoulders, the neck and the arms. This form of massage is used mainly for relaxation and combating Stress. It is useful for the relief of headaches, eye strain or muscle tension in the neck or shoulders. It may improve circulation, promote hair growth, improve concentration, help with the dispersal of toxins, aid mental tiredness and emotional stress.

Hopi Ear Candles;

Over the last 19 years, the use of Hopi Ear Candles has gained popularity and is increasingly sought after by people looking for a natural therapy for problems such as ringing in the ears, painful sinuses, balance and inner ear problems, snoring, excessive or compacted ear wax, headaches of all types, painful nerves in the face, "Swimmer's Ear", "Diver's Ear", flying problems, stress and nervousness.

Kathy qualified in Reflexology in 1995 and Aromatherapy in 1996, followed by Indian Head Massage and Hopi Ear Candling. Kathy has been practising from her treatment room in Buckland St Mary, between Chard and Taunton, since moving to the area in 2010.

Kathy is a member of the Complementary Therapists Association which is part of Embody and fully insured, see www.embodyforyou.com. She is also registered with CNHC (Complementary & Natural Healthcare Council).

Kathy's treatment room is in her home in Buckland St Mary. After the consultation, she turns down the lights to create a relaxing atmosphere and always offers her clients water or herbal tea to drink. It is an unhurried, homely atmosphere and not at all clinical or conveyor-belt-like. There is free parking outside. All treatments are tailored to the individual, and are preceded by a consultation about lifestyle, health and diet. Advice on self-treatment and lifestyle changes can also be provided.

Therapeutic Breaks

LOGGE HOUSE operates as a B&B with currently one large guest room with a king sized bed for 2 people. Therefore complementary therapies can be combined with an overnight stay, making the treatment even more relaxing and enjoyable.

For further information see the website www.kathynoldtherapies.co.uk or contact her on 01460 234693 or email her at kathy.arnold@virgin.net

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LeisureReview

Fantastic line-up for next Yarcombe Film Nights season

YARCOMBE Film Nights has now been running successfully for almost three years, providing a film on the second Thursday of every month. The largest attendances were, not surprisingly, for The King's Speech and The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel. We try to find films which will suit all generations, and which also include some of the better known stars of the film industry, along with some newcomers. All the films are recent releases. The films are provided and shown by Moviola who are a charity-based organisation, who bring entertainment to the rural areas.

Our evenings start at 7.30pm, (doors open 7pm), in Yarcombe Village Hall. We begin with a short film, often in some way relating to the main film and follow this with a refreshment interval, when ice-cream and tea and biscuits are served at a very modest cost. Tickets can be bought 'on the door' for £5, but booking is advised for the most popular films. Please telephone 01404 861386 or 01404 861541.

We begin our next season of films on Thursday 10 January with *ANNA KARENINA* (12A), starring Keira Knightley and Jude Law.

This is the Classic Tolstoy story of marital infidelity in an adaptation by Tom Stoppard. Keira Knightley is Anna, Jude Law her husband Count Karenin and Aaron Johnson is Vronsky. A powerful supporting cast includes stalwarts Olivia Williams, Emma Watson, Kelly Macdonald and Matthew Macfadyen. Visually spectacular and with the exciting idea from Stoppard of setting the whole story in a theatre, this is classic film-

making at its lushest.

For future reference here is a list of our films for the ensuing months:

Thursday 14 February - GAMBIT.

FAMOUS writer-directors Ethan and Joel Coen adapt the 60s Michael Caine film for today's audiences with a smashing UK cast headed by Colin Firth, Tom Courtenay and Alan Rickman augmented by US stalwarts Stanley Tucci, Cloris Leachman and the charming Cameron Diaz. "If Colin Firth's downtrodden art curator is to get the better of his unpleasant millionaire employer (Alan Rickman) he must enlist the help of a master forger (Tom Courtenay) and a Texas cowgirl (Cameron Diaz). Ming vases, lions, broken noses and missing trousers all feature in this glorious Coen Brothers-scripted crime comedy which also has a standout performance from Stanley Tucci as a German art historian. All extremely silly but very funny"

Thursday 14 March - QUARTET

DUSTIN Hoffman's first turn at directing a film and with a dream Moviola cast: Maggie Smith, Tom Courtenay, Pauline Collins, Michael Gambon, Billy Connolly, Andrew Sachs and Trevor Peacock. This is a version of Roland Harwood's much loved play, set in a retirement home for aging musicians where preparations for the annual gala are thrown into chaos by the arrival of Opera Diva Jean (Maggie Smith). One reviewer called this film a 'shed load of fun' and one can see how much everyone involved enjoyed the thing. Pauline

Collins steals the show from everyone - a lovely fragile performance - but there are so many memorable sweet and poignant moments. This is going to be a huge, huge hit for our audience age group. It comes out in the cinema at the start of January and we have it just 8 weeks later.

Thursday 11 April - SKYFALL

QUITE marvellous and utterly British, apart from Javier Bardem's over the top Latino villain. This is as much a story about M as it is about Bond and Judi Dench may well get the Oscar for it next year. Ralph Fiennes is excellent. Ben Wishaw is splendid as a new (and revolutionist) Q.

There is even a new Moneypenny (but not to give the plot away) does not appear until the end. A wheezing Albert Finney appears (took all of two minutes to recognise him). And there are lots of other surprises, especially a very important car. It is surprisingly moving. Sam Mendes directs and makes the actors work hard, so it is not just bangs and chases. The key to the film is a scene in the National Gallery with Bond looking at Turner's 'Fighting Temeraire'-the old outdated battleship being towed to her final resting place. Bond films customarily do not attract big audiences in Moviola but this one just might. A lot of people will want to see it again and our older audience can identify. When seeing the film in Cologne the audience applauded when the end credit came up "50 years James Bond will Return" If it works for the Germans it might well for our lot too.

The Opera Dudes are Licensed to Trill

THE Opera Dudes - Licensed to Trill is an amusing and original classical tenor double act. Two intrepid singing agents - a former Cambridge Scholar and ex-builder, code-names Posh & Bricks will take to the stage. This fearless pair chart their journey through a variety of musical styles, always on the lookout for their evil nemesis, Donald Duck. Be prepared as the Dudes take you on a journey through their crazy careers, with wonderful music and an ill-judged attempt to turn the audience into a corps de ballet!

The duo presents a range of music from opera, swing and showstoppers. It is also one of the funniest and most entertaining shows that you can see.

No other act will take you from Verdi and Elvis Presley to Lloyd Webber, via Rachmaninoff and Donald Duck - don't be surprised to find your feet tapping, your sides splitting and your heart breaking!

For more details on this act visit their website at www.operadudes.com

The show will be on Thursday, February 21st at Clayhidon Parish Hall, Battle Street, and is part of the Villages In Action season.

For more details on the show and the Villages In Action season, or to book tickets you can call 01823 680 347 or visit www.villagesinaction.co.uk



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Price includes

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Blackpool and the Lakes

A four night midweek break!
Departs 13 May 2013

Stay in the popular resort of Blackpool and enjoy the sea air and two full day excursions. Explore Windermere and the majestic mountains, sparkling lakes and lush green valleys of the southern Lake District and on another day, visit the coastal gems of elegant Southport and delightful Lytham St Annes.

Price includes

- Coach travel throughout
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Departs 4 June & 11 October 2013

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Price includes

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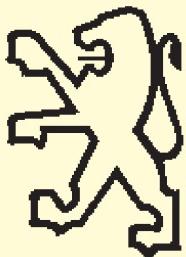
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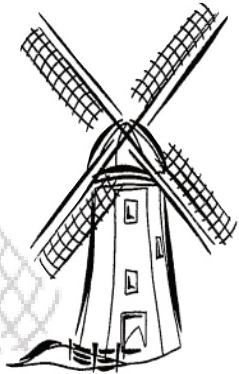
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A substantial barn conversion centred around a cobbled courtyard and enjoying fine country views over the surrounding countryside. Garage/workshop, extensive outbuildings, cobbled courtyards & gardens. Ref: 43585
Guide price £499,950

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